Crystal Gems Under Threat: V.I.L.E.'s Devious Plan and Adora's Unusual Fascination

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Crystal Gems Under Threat: V.I.L.E.'s Devious Plan and Adora's Unusual Fascination

by lefemmerouge

Summary

Adora has returned to Earth with the Crystal Gems, adapting to her new home, letting go of the burden of being She-Ra, a role for which she was "chosen." But, she and the Gems face a new challenge when a mysterious woman appears in Beach City demanding Steven come back to an island, and meet a twenty-something international thief, who has a mission of her own. Can they all work together to face the common enemy of evil? Or will their personalities get in the way, causing disagreement and division? Only time will tell...

Notes

This an AU with the Carmen Sandiego, Steven Universe, and She-Ra and Princesses of Power series happening in the same universe. It picks up right where the last part of this series, "For the Honor of Etheria" left off, with Adora joining the Crystal Gems on Earth. In this universe, the events in season 3 (and upcoming season 4) of She-Ra do not happen, neither did the events in Season 2 of the Carmen Sandiego series, nor those of the recent Steven Universe movie. As such, this story takes place after Change Your Mind, i.e. the end of Season 5 of Steven Universe, after season 2 of She-Ra and the Princesses of Power series, and after season 1 of the Carmen Sandiego series, even though I incorporated some elements from the reveal at the end of Season 2 about Carmen's past into this story. I wanted to bring together three of my favorite series into one story! For further reference, here is the map I created, with all the locations used in this story appearing on there. Peridot's name is abbreviated as Peri, apart from the first mention, to make her more personable.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Update on 1/1/25: This fic has been reposted on Squidge World under the name "Crystal Gems Under Threat?: V.I.L.E.'s Devious Plan and Adora's Feminine Fascination." It has been updated from its previous version, with changes to sentence structure, dialogue, and other updates to make the fic stronger than the original version.

See the end of the work for more notes

It had been about six weeks since her encounter with Coach Brunt and Shadowsan in Poitiers. Carmen had *effectively* recovered from the crushing of her rib cage by Coach Brunt in what could be accurately described as a hug of death. Shadowsan had given her a new hard drive, filled with information about V.I.L.E.'s upcoming capers, which her hacker friend, Player, had decrypted. However, the two siblings (Zack and Ivy), who were also on her team, gave her time to rest. Since she hadn't been moving about from place to place, the A.C.M.E gumshoes were stumped. This organization, otherwise known as the Agency to Classify and Monitor Evildoers, had Chase Devineaux and Julia Argent as recent recruit. Their CrimeNet technology had become useless, especially since V.I.L.E. knew about their existence. As such, V.I.L.E. felt that defeating them was a higher priority than going after Carmen. In that way, Carmen's team had a reprieve since V.I.L.E. had paused their capers. Shadowsan, serving as Carmen's informant inside V.I.L.E., hoped this situation would give her time to mentally and physically recover.

Carmen confusedly looked at her laptop screen. She wondered what was going on. "So...Player, V.I.LE.'s next caper is in a peaceful town in the state of Delmarva, named...Beach City. I don't understand what V.I.L.E.'s angle is here."

"Red, I don't get it either. But, looking back through these records, while you were recovering, it seems they have been watching the town and its inhabitants for the past 20 years."

He paused, sighing. He thought she wouldn't believe what he was about to say. It sounded ridiculous what he was going to tell her. But he had to share it.

"In their reports, they say something about magical powers...and a group that wields them...They seem to be concerned this group will ruin their plans of world domination."

Carmen let out a hearty laugh. She stared at the image on her screen with amazement. How could these evildoers be so pathetic? This was who they were worried about?

"They...are scared of a chubby kid who gets powers from his bellybutton and...his friends? Seriously? Gosh, V.I.L.E. is *getting desperate*. Regardless, we need to stop them before something bad happens."

Player agreed. He felt the same way about V.I.L.E. It almost seemed like a ploy by Shadowsan so Carmen could prove herself once again. If that was the case, he didn't want to say anything.

"Red, I'll book you a private jet from Poitiers to Philadelphia, in the Keystone State. You can catch a boat from there to Beach City."

Carmen concurred. While packing her bags, she told Zack and Ivy that they were going on a trip. Like all their missions, they would be face-to-face with the evildoers of V.I.L.E. Deviating from his normal behavior, Zack voiced his concerns.

"Carm, are you sure you are healed from that scuff in Poitiers? That Coach hurt you pretty bad."

She nodded and ignored his question. His concern didn't matter, especially *not* now. Her recovery would have to wait. As he was about to pester her some more, Ivy dragged him away. She told him that they needed to get ready.

Meanwhile in Beach City, Steven and the Gems were re-adjusting to Earth. While it had been a few weeks since Carmen had fought Coach Brunt, it had been only a few days since they had arrived from Etheria. Adora continued her sword training with Pearl. She was still enthralled by her new friends. Occasionally, Steven and Connie would attend. Often Pearl would tell them it would be *rude* to come and watch her "special friend" Adora sword fight. Steven could imagine what happened between them on the Ancient Sky Arena. But, he kept an open mind. He appreciated that Adora chose to stay with them since she could become a new friend that he could learn from.

Just then, he spied a 20-year-old woman walking on the beach, with flowing pink hair draped over her right shoulder. She was wearing a turquoise wrap dress, had on pink lipstick, and pale-yellow ballerina flats. They were a bit like the shoes that Pearl often wore. She also carried a pair of dark blue gloves. While he didn't mind her walking on the beach. He became suspicious when he saw her launch a small drone. As he pondered who it might be, instead of going out by himself, he asked those in the Beach House to help. While Pearl and Adora were training together, Garnet, Amethyst, Peridot, Lapis, and Connie were more than happy to help him confront this mystery woman.

As they walked down the wooden steps to the warm beach sands, the woman stopped, turned, and looked at them with piercing hazel eyes. Some could call her beautiful, by their standards. This didn't negate the possibility that she was up to no good. Leading the group, Steven approached her and tried to start a conversation. "Hi! I'm Steven. I haven't seen you around these parts before. Are you new here?"

The woman smiled almost like a Cheshire cat. It freaked out Steven and everyone else. Taking in what Steven had asked her, she attempted to answer his question. Perhaps he was who she had been looking for.

"Yes. I'm...from Utco, you know, in the West. I'm here today on a mission. I'm looking for a 'Steven Universe.' Do you know where he is?"

Nervously, not knowing what would happen, Steven began to answer. He prepared himself for any evil or rash actions against him. "Yes, you're looking at him."

She howled devilishly. A look of satisfaction spread across her face relieved she had done something right. She put on her dark blue gloves. She pulled out what looked like a grappling cable and aimed it at Steven.

"Well...Steven...you are coming with me. I *need* to bring you back to V.I.L.E. Island to *study* you."

Steven's reaction surprised her. As the cable began to pass around him, his reflexes kicked in and he put up his pink-colored bubble in defense. The grappling hook had no effect. Angry that she had been foiled so easily, she pulled out a Crackle Rod, using it against the bubble in hopes of breaking it. Again, this did not work.

Connie and Peri stood beside Steven, one on each side of Steven's pink bubble. Garnet, Amethyst, and Lapis went on the attack. Garnet readied her gauntlets while Amethyst used her electrified whip to entrap the mystery woman, shocking her with an electric current. The woman fell to the ground. She had been trapped by Lapis's ice wall. Clearly, she was no match for the Crystal Gems.

Her gadgets a mess, the woman sank to the ground in defeat. Garnet, Lapis, and Amethyst surrounded her, with Connie, Peri, and Steven at the ready. She would soon have a chance to redeem herself, or so she thought. She could see, in the sky, a red hang glider carrying a woman, the same age as her, with a trademark red fedora and coat, her long brown hair blowing in the wind. She recognized this woman as Carmen Sandiego, the V.I.L.E's top enemy.

Despite the fact she had been defeated by the Gems, the mystery woman chortled. She may have lost but she could still escape. She hoped they would be distracted enough so she could slip away, even as she recognized the challenge before her. "You can capture me now, but...look up in the sky! It's Carmen Sandiego, the international master thief. Would *you* let her get away?"

The Gems cackled, not taking her seriously. They were astounded when the mystery woman was suddenly encircled by a grappling hook fired from underneath the sleeve of Carmen's coat. Unlike the rest of them, Carmen recognized this mystery woman and her code name. She had attended V.I.L.E. Academy at the same time as her. While she did not expect to meet her again after leaving the island, she had prepared for a challenge such as this one.

"Silky Snapper. What a pleasure to see you. I'm here to stop your caper...This ends now!"

Peri bowled over, giggling. She had never heard such a laughable name. It almost seemed comical. She jested Silky and made fun of her to her face.

"Seriously, that's your name? It sounds *so fake*. I could come up with a better name with my finger screens in one minute than a clod like you...that is just sad."

Her face red with embarrassment, Silky didn't know what to say. Not only had Peri made her angry, making her want to lash out in retaliation but she been trapped by Carmen and the Gems. When all hope seemed lost, she had one more trick. Using electricity left over from Amethyst's whip, and her crackle rod, she electrified Carmen's rope, even as she suffered excruciating pain in the process. She hoped this would cause Carmen to drop the rope, aiding her escape.

Carmen jumped back, letting go of the rope, while Silky pulled out another gadget. It looked like a small box. She pressed the top and it activated a propeller, allowing her to fly away. As she yelled "this isn't over Carmen, I'm coming for you!" the Gems wanted to knock her out of

the sky with their powers. Steven, a sensible person, told them to restrain themselves. They did so, allowing her to fly away.

Only Carmen, and her boat in the distance, with Zack and Ivy aboard, were left. Everyone turned their eyes to Carmen, who apologized for making a scene. Steven acknowledged her and as he was about to say something, Pearl came running in, with Adora by her side, each with their own weapons. As Adora stood at the ready with a sword gifted to her by Pearl, the Gem approached, holding her spear tightly. Her voice boomed. She pointed her spear at Carmen's head.

"Who are you? And why are you in front of *our* house?"

With Pearl demanding answers, Carmen was terrified. She told them, fearfully, that she had come there to stop an organization named V.I.L.E., also known as the Villains International League of Evil. While she admitted that Silky had correctly described her as an "international master thief," she only stole as a matter of justice, stealing from other thieves, rather than playing a game. Furthermore, she had come to Beach City because of V.I.L.E.'s increased interest in the town and Steven, and she wanted to know why they cared so much.

Garnet, Amethyst, and Pearl scratched their heads. Spending thousands of years on Earth, they'd never heard of V.I.L.E. Lapis and Peri were similarly stumped. Steven and Connie were more welcoming. They wanted to know more. Unlike the rest of them, Adora, like with the sea horses near Salineas, became entranced. She'd never seen someone like Carmen before, with such a unique fashion sense and flowing brown hair. Stunned by what she saw, she became fascinated, something which eluded everyone else. She didn't know what to say to Carmen other than "hi!" and wave her hand sheepishly. She smiled back, making Adora feel a bit flustered. Had she met a *new friend*? Only time would tell.

Steven and Connie told Carmen, who felt better and not as terrified, to follow them into their house where they could talk more. Feeling welcomed, she walked behind Steven and Connie up the steps. She informed Zack, Ivy, and Player that there was nothing to worry about. Adora ran alongside. Garnet, Amethyst, Pearl, Lapis, and Peri came in after her. They all wanted to know more about this woman, the second mystery woman who'd visited! Bismuth, who'd been working on the house, damaged during the fighting with Blue and Yellow Diamond, would have been present, but weekends were her time for a break. This meant that, unintentionally, she missed all the commotion around the two mystery women. But she would meet Carmen soon enough. There was no doubt about that.

As everyone filed into the house, packing it tightly, they were ready to hear what Carmen had to say. Steven readied his ukulele, and Connie her violin, asking her to sing her story, like Greg did when telling his stories. While she felt a little nervous, she breathed deeply, and broke into song, with Steven and Connie playing their instruments in the background. Listening from afar, Player, Zack, and Ivy were taken off guard. Nothing like this had ever happened, not in any of their travels together. They were as mesmerized as everyone else.

In Buenos Aires, I was an infant

As my home burned,

Shadowsan saved me in an instant

I was brought to V.I.L.E. Island, it became my new home

They raised me as one of their own

As I grew up, I learned to fight, to steal

It was all I ever knew

I accepted it as the only thing I could call "real"

When I found a phone, a whole new world opened to me

I knew I wasn't alone

I realized I could be what I wanted to be

Crime school was a unique start

But I realized I had a stone-cold heart

I had no compassion, no affection

I was just a reflection

After I escaped from V.I.L.E. Isle

I created a new style

Carmen Sandiego was born

And I had sworn

V.I.L.E. would be defeated

It would be cheated!

I would be a thief who stole from thieves

For the greater good

I would accept no reprieves

This would be my livelihood

And here I am a few years later

Player, Ivy, and Zack by my side

And you all listen to me wild-eyed

I know now I am not alone

And I have grown...

Everyone clapped and cheered. Ivy, Zack, and Player were completely speechless, recovering from how Carmen's voice had soared like an eagle in her magnificent performance. Adora shouted "you go, girl!" enjoying Carmen's performance more than anyone else. While the Gems did not expect this, Adora's response to Carmen set off Pearl. She had the impression that Adora saw Carmen in a *better light* than herself. She was jealous.

Her self-esteem, as a result, seemed to be declining faster than a speeding roller coaster. She quickly stepped onto the warp pad, wishing everyone goodbye as tears streamed down her face. She could hear Steven shouting, "Wait, Pearl, where are you going?" but made no attempt to answer. Like she had in the past, she *felt lost*, without value or meaning. She thought she didn't have the "relevance" to be influential, even though this belief had no basis.

While everyone else mellowed out, talking to each other, trying to learn more about Carmen, after her beautiful song, Peri could see Steven was worried. She saw this as an opportunity to test her cross-warp location device, which had never been fully tested. She snickered with delight, as she announced her "discovery."

"I know exactly where Pearl is. Every use of the warp pad feeds back to my tablet, tracking where the warp ends. Its pure science, Steven, and I love it! NYEH!"

Steven was worried about this and directly challenged his friend. "Um, Peri, isn't that a...violation of privacy?"

Peri burst into a guffaw over Steven's comment, which seemed utterly absurd. She scoffed at the fact that anyone would even think that way.

"No, no, no, Steven. That's pure drivel. This is for a good cause! PRAISE ME!"

Steven felt no reason to challenge her further, despite his reservations about this method. He wanted to know where Pearl had gone, in hopes of consoling her. He was willing to go along with it for the *time being*. Sighing, he turned to Peri. "Ok, Peri, tell me where Pearl is. I'd *like* to see her."

Peri beamed with radiance, her hair becoming an even brighter chartreuse yellow, excited that Steven was willing to give her a chance. She knew that Steven didn't approve of her method, but she didn't care. On Earth, she could express herself in whatever way she pleased, and no one could tell her what to do. So, she went on with her spiel.

"According to my calculations, the warp pad last deactivated in...the Strawberry Battlefield, a couple of minutes ago. That must be where she is. I'm sure of it!"

With that, Steven stepped on the warp pad, warping to the battlefield, which sat in the Great Scandinavian Republic, or G.S.R. for short. It was a place the Crystal Gems had once fought the Homeworld Gems during the Gem War (alternatively called "The Rebellion") thousands of years ago. Since then it had been overrun by butterflies and wild strawberries. This contrasted the death and destruction wrought there over the years.

When Steven arrived, he couldn't see Pearl anywhere, but he heard her singing softly and mournfully in the distance. Clearly, Amethyst and Garnet, who had joked many years before, that Pearl couldn't sing, were wrong. Following the sound of her voice, he saw her atop of a hill and bawling. Unlike the last time, when he had to chase down Pearl across a set of boulders and almost died, she resigned herself to his presence. While she continued to cry, she sat in a meditative pose, trying to relax and regain her composure. Her self-esteem continued to be low, but her tears began drying off her face. The breeze blew them away like rose petals floating through the air.

Steven approached, apprehensively, putting his hand on her shoulder in an attempt to calm her. Pearl hugged him back and told him her deepest fear: a loss of friendship and connection, worthlessness in the world itself.

"What if Adora likes this 'Carmen' better than me...what if she just discards me like a useless piece of junk and...leaves me behind?"

Steven did not expect this. Of course, he couldn't forget the past interactions of Pearl and Adora in Mystacor and the underwater archive outside Salineas, while he, and none of the other Gems, were aware of their nighttime embrace near Plumeria. Adora's choice to relinquish her powers as a magical princess and join them on Earth, a huge sacrifice on her part, had been forever imprinted in his memory. Even so, he hadn't expected Pearl's reaction. He knew that Adora, by coming to Earth, could now start a new life. But, did *the same* apply to Pearl? Did her interaction and closeness with Adora change her outlook on life and the world? Was she done thinking about the past? Did she want to be a "new Pearl" all about the future and *without a plan*? The possibility terrified Steven even more than when she had been chased by a police cruiser near Ocean Town, but as her friend, he did his best to understand her.

"Pearl, you are wonderful. No one is going to leave you behind or discard you. Adora is adapting to Earth, finding her footing, and experimenting. That's ok! This is a constantly

changing planet where you can express yourself in whatever way you see fit, something we should all embrace."

Pearl calmed down, realizing that Steven's logic was sound. They walked to a nearby warp pad and soon returned to the Beach House. Everyone had been waiting apprehensively for her return. She was welcomed her back. She told them that she felt better now. Steven nodded in concurrence. No one wanted to pry into her personal feelings, so they accepted the situation as it presented itself. Pearl walked over to Adora and hugged her, an embrace she accepted, as they saw each other as equals despite their age differences.

As the sun went down, Connie left so she could return to her home not far from Beach City, where she lived with her parents. Peri and Lapis retired to the bathroom, as they didn't have a permanent place of residence *yet*. In the meantime, Amethyst, Pearl, and Garnet went into their respective rooms in the Crystal Castle. Before he went to his loft bed, Steven prepared the couch so Adora could sleep there. He gave Carmen an extra sleeping bag and pillow to use, so she could sleep on the floor. Everyone said their good-nights and hoped for a wonderful day to come. Carmen reassured Player, Ivy, and Zack before falling asleep.

The next morning, the sun's rays shined through the Beach House, signifying the new day had begun. Steven got up and prepared to make breakfast for everyone, so he could continue accustoming Adora to Earth and welcome their new guest, Carmen. She stretched her arms and woke up. She was about to go to the bathroom and freshen up, not remembering that Peri and Lapis lived there. Steven's presence startled her. "Hi, Steven, what are you doing up this early?"

Steven smiled. He told her that breakfast for everyone would be finished shortly. He continued, saying he was glad she had come to Beach City the day before. She pulled out her phone and began to talk to Player about her fight with Silky Snapper, the possibility of a new caper, and more. Her interactions fascinated Steven. Since he played video games from time to time, he wondered about this "Player" she had been talking to.

Waiting for a pause in the conversation, Steven asked her about this mysterious person he heard her talking to. "Carmen, who is this "Player"? Is he a video game player? A friend? Is that his real name?"

Her face turned a little red since she had not been expecting this question. From what she could tell, Steven seemed like a nice person, but she didn't want to reveal much about herself. While she could say a bit, no one would know her full and true nature but herself. It a method she used in order for her to cope and protect herself from harm.

"Steven, Player is my friend. He's into tinkering with computers and technology, you know, hacking. He's helped me out of sticky situations, and I owe him a lot."

His eyes lit up, amazed. He had the perfect idea. After asking Carmen if she wanted part of his "together breakfast" (consisting of a tower of waffles covered in whipped cream, syrup, and popcorn, garnished by a strawberry), which she declined since she only liked healthy foods, he put the breakfast in the fridge. He knocked on the door of the bathroom, waking up Peri and Lapis, telling both there was something he'd like to show them. Grumbling about

getting up so early, Peri came to the door, slowly opening it, wondering what Steven wanted. He shouted to her, "Carmen's friend is a hacker!"

This excited Peri as much as Steven. She told Lapis they needed to go to the "Peri-Shack," as she called it, near the Crystal Temple. A bit tired, Lapis said she might join in later. She wanted to get a bit more sleep. While Garnet continued to sleep, as did Adora, the commotion woke up Pearl and Amethyst. They didn't know why Steven had unintentionally rustled them from their slumber. In unison, both Gems inquisitively asked about it.

"Steven...what is it? What's all this noise about?"

While Steven apologized for waking them up, as it had not been his intention, Peri declared they would be journeying to the "Peri-Shack." The name seemed silly, but Amethyst respected it. Patting her on the back, she remarked, "Peri, that's why I love you so much, you are such a nerd," to which Peri nervously smiled. Carmen wasn't completely sure about it but had been reassured by Steven it would be fine. She asked Player if he'd like to meet her new friends from the Beach House, to which he agreed. He hoped this wouldn't didn't throw them off the mission. She told him it would not.

Getting to the shack, Peri welcomed them, with everyone sitting down on wooden benches. She relished the opportunity to show off her technological prowess. Little did they know, but in the same small shack, Lapis and Peri had been thinking about starting their own TubeTube show. Peri asked Carmen if it would be OK to plug in her phone into the room's technology system, to which she agreed on the condition that her phone not be damaged. Everything worked perfectly: Player showed up on a huge screen mounted on a wall in front of them. Before Pearl, Amethyst, Steven, or Carmen could say anything, Peri spoke first.

"Hey, I'm Peridot!...also known as Peri...I've heard you like hacking computers and systems...that's so cool! Is there anything you'd like us to help you with?"

This candor and offer for help weren't something Player had anticipated. But, he accepted it because apart from Ivy creating Carmen's gadgets, he was the only one who knew the ins and outs of technology on their team. "I'm glad you asked! We've been tracking V.I.L.E. and its evil deeds across the planet. We had a tip that they were planning some heist in Beach City, but we *can't* figure out what it is. If you could help us learn why they came here, that would be great!"

Peri understood everything he said but the word "heist." Even after her binging of Camp Pining Hearts and her detailed, extensive fan fictions, shipping certain campers over others, she had never come across this word. She told Player she'd have to excuse herself for a second and brought Steven outside the shack. "Steven, I have something to ask you." She then sighed. "What does the word 'heist' mean?"

Steven let out a hearty chuckle, surprised that Peri didn't know this, even after her wide-ranging consumption of human culture. Without wanting to embarrass her, he whispered, telling her that a heist is a robbery or hold-up, similar to the word "caper," the latter generally refers to an illegal or criminal act, although it seemed unlikely that what V.I.L.E. had in store could be called a heist. It looked more like a caper. Peri understood and thanked Steven for his help.

Stepping back into the shack, she admitted that while her technology was a bit antiquated, she could help this hacker friend of Carmen solve this mystery. She first thought about what Beach City had that other cities and towns did not. Sure, other beach towns had restaurants, bike shops, amusement parks, music stores, theaters, visitor centers, donut shops, public libraries, lighthouses, candy stores, public parks, car washes, inns, pizzerias, shirt shops, storage facilities, hot dog stands, and private residences. Even towns had their own abandoned warehouses, brooding hills, abandoned quarries, mini-golf courses, wooded areas, and nearby beach homes. One thing distinguished all these beach communities, whether Ocean Town, Surf City, Sea City, Aqua Town, or Bayburg, from Beach City: The Crystal Temple, the longstanding headquarters of the Crystal Gems.

Peri gasped in horror. Looking at what Player had discovered, she put together the pieces. V.I.L.E. wanted to, from what she could gather, harvest the energy from the Crystal Temple for their devious schemes. Since these evildoers were not gems, they couldn't access the rooms for Pearl, Amethyst, Rose, or Sardonyx, but they could, through some methods, get to The Burning Room or the Crystal Heart. In the files he could find, was a video from Dr. Gunnar Maelstrom, a Doctor of Psychology who taught at V.I.L.E. Academy. He practiced psychiatry and was a dedicated criminal mastermind. In the video clip, he whooped like a hyena and began speaking.

"We have an opportunity to turn V.I.L.E. into a super force, wiping out those *scum* of the Earth, A.C.M.E., and with it, probably Carmen Sandiego. This place has all the energy we need for the ultimate weapon, an endless supply. Coach Brunt, Countess Cleo, and Dr. Saira Bellum will be pleased. Every day we come closer to total world domination. This is the first step. *No one* can stop us now, not even Carmen Sandiego!"

This talk unnerved Player and Carmen, feeling almost paralyzed. All the heists they had foiled before had been for rare documents, like copies of the Magna Carta, precious coins, famous paintings, and so on, but never anything at this scale. Seeing they were scared and didn't know what to do, and before Amethyst, Pearl, or Peri could say anything, Steven did his best to inspire them. He told them they needed to be "strong in the real way" and would prevail, no matter what. His talk put a smile on their faces and took them out of their funk. They were ready to plan. Carmen remembered something: she had put a tracker/camera on Silky Snapper. Player activated it and connected it to Carmen's datapad. It showed a location out in the Atlantic Ocean. Even though it was a wild guess, Pearl threw it out there, acting like she knew what she was talking about.

"Oh my, that's the Sea Shrine...er, where it usually is. We better get there right away!"

Carmen noticed a nearby ship. She could hear Silky Snapper talking about getting drill heads for the operation, remarking the place to get them was deep in Mipsia.

This made the plan of the evildoers clear: they planned to steal drills from the Prime Kindergarten in Mipsia and use them to drill into the Crystal Temple, stealing the "power source" for themselves. Neither the Gems nor Carmen and her gang of fellow thieves cared for A.C.M.E. but thought about the consequences if this plan of V.I.L.E. succeeded. Lapis, Carmen, and Peri would head off the V.I.L.E. ship near the location of the sometimes present

Sea Shrine, while Amethyst and Garnet would fight off those trying to steal drills from the Prime Kindergarten.

In the meantime, Steven, Adora, and Pearl stayed behind, possibly getting help from Bismuth and Connie, defending the Crystal Temple itself. Lapis, Garnet, and Adora had been awoken, with all ready to help and defend their home. Amethyst and Garnet warped to the Prime Kindergarten, while Peri, who Lapis carried, her water wings flapping in the wind, were en route to the area where the Sea Shrine sometimes existed. Carmen followed them on her hang glider, telling Zack and Ivy to be at the ready if they needed help.

Arriving in the Prime Kindergarten, Amethyst and Garnet could see chains tied to some injectors, with V.I.L.E. henchmen trying to dislodge them, one operating a crane of some type. Amethyst whispered to Garnet that she was going to "kick their ass." Garnet told her to be calm, stating that dislodging even one injector would give these evildoers an advantage in their plan to drill into the Crystal Temple. While Pearl told them not to use their Gem powers on humans, they had no choice in the matter, as these people were threatening their home and way of life. After one henchman finished talking to Dr. Maelstrom, glad at their progress, the chain of their crane had a weird blue glow to it, looking like an electric current. Before he knew it, the whole machine had become electrified. He jumped out as it exploded, saving himself. The other henchmen coughed while attempting to breath through the black smoke cloud.

When the smoke cleared, he saw Amethyst and Garnet standing on top of the wreckage. They shouted "stop your destruction at once, before we have to hurt you!" The henchmen were terrified. They began to run. Amethyst wouldn't let them get away that easily. Not knowing what they were doing, most of them ran in a pack, together, allowing Amethyst to trap them with one of her whips. One straggler, the man who had fled the crane before it became rubble, couldn’t escape. Amethyst's second whip brought him in. Since Amethyst's whips disappeared, Garnet pulled the chains off the crane to tie up these evildoers, as something more permanent.

In an effort to complete the cycle and lessen the violence, Amethyst shapeshifted into a baseball bat, which Garnet wielded, hitting the tied-up humans with her full strength, shouting "you're outta here!" While Amethyst felt a bit sore from the endeavor, the evildoers were gone. They few through the air at a fast rate of speed, across a great distance. The Crystal Temple *had been saved* from the drills of injectors but...the fight wasn't over yet.

Lapis, Peri, and Carmen arrived near where the Sea Shrine sometimes existed, when it wasn't underwater. They did from the V.I.L.E. henchmen. Silky Snapper thought she heard something but continued to work with nearby henchmen to set up a huge cannon on a floating island. Carmen recognized it immediately, as it looked like a huge crackle rod, likely one of Dr. Saira Bellum's newest toys. Due to the direction it was pointing, she surmised that its first test would be an attack on Beach City. As the cannon began powering up, Lapis, Peri, and Carmen readied their counterattack.

Suddenly, they saw what looked like a fireball coming through the sky, at a rapid speed. It struck the floating lab of Dr. Maelstrom, the *Imaginarium*, sitting in the adjoining ocean area, a cross-between an aircraft carrier and a battleship, in the bow, creating a huge hole. The

"fireball" had been the henchmen from the Kindergarten. They laid upon the ship's deck, injured, with their arms and legs broken. This distracted Silky. She told the henchmen on the floating island to protect the cannon. She swam toward the ship, hoping to help in any way she could.

Once Silky had swum far enough away, Lapis, Peri, and Carmen began their attack. They knocked out the henchmen and took control of the cannon. Through their combined willpower and force, they turned the cannon around, as it continued to charge. Seeing this, Silky shouted "no, no, no!" as a blast from the cannon left the barrel and headed straight for he damaged ship's bridge. Dr. Maelstrom sat there with a wicked smile, not expecting the ship's complete destruction. The resulting massive explosion caused a huge tidal wave, moving in Beach City's direction. Lapis used her powers to redirect the water to wash over the ship's wreckage.

Scanning for lifeforms, Peri and Carmen watched from the floating island. Peri's scanner picked up a few life readings. They could see Silky and Dr. Maelstrom, along with the injured henchmen. Maelstrom called for "the cleaners" to rescue them, but his voice had become so faint neither one couldn't hear him. Silky pulled out a waterproof gadget and pressed its big red button. A raft appeared. She shouted, "you haven't won yet, Carmen, the battle isn't over!" While Peri and Lapis wanted to pursue them, Carmen convinced them not to, telling them that letting these evildoers go was the right decision...this time around.

Afterward, Lapis, Peri, and Carmen approached the cannon, emblazoned with the words "Bellum Crackle Rod Cannon" on the side. The henchmen, who had been knocked out cold, hadn't woken up yet. Carmen had an idea. She told Zack and Ivy to meet them there. Coming in their speedboat, Zack and Ivy arrived at the floating island. They loaded the tied up henchmen and the cannon. While this weighed down the boat, Zack could still drive it.

Carmen asked if Lapis and Peri wanted to join them, saying they could motor back to Beach City. Both Gems concurred. After Lapis and Peri introduced themselves, Zack told Lapis that her use of water was "awesome." Ivy didn't know what to make of Peri, calling her cute, to which she said, "I am not!" defiantly.

Moving to the ship's bow, Zack took the wheel and steered the boat forward, while Carmen, Lapis, Peri, and Ivy relaxed, sitting in the back. The day had been won, but...at what cost?

Lightning crackled in the distance and rain poured down, covering the V.I.L.E. Academy windows. Dr. Maelstrom, whose his arm was in a sling because of injuries after he sustained from the *Imaginarium*'s destruction, looked out the window and smirked. Using his other arm, he opened a window. Although he was drenched in the downpour, he shouted loud enough for anyone to hear, and waved his fist wildly.

"You haven't won, yet, Black Sheep! I have just begun! If it's the last thing I do, you will go down in flames and Steven Universe will be mine for the taking! Just you watch!"

End Notes

In the creation of Silky Snapper, Shalin Jacob's "The Ultimate Guide To Different Kinds Of Dresses & What Would Suit You Best," Jennifer Lyons's "Colors That Match With Turquoise," and PopOptiq's "29 Types of Shoes for Women – Do You Know them All?" were helpful in forming the character's appearance. I also took inspiration from previous Carmen Sandiego characters, as noted on the appropriate fandom, such as Venus H. Pencil, Snarla Swing, Sarah Nade, Patty Larceny, Kneemoi, Jacqueline Hyde, Eartha Brute, Dee Cryption, Contessa, and Auntie Bellum.

When it came to the song by Carmen, I took inspiration from many songs in Steven Universe ("Be Wherever You Are", "On the Run", "Wailing Stone", "Full Disclosure", "Do It for Her", "Tower of Mistakes", "Haven't You Noticed (I'm a Star)", "Peace and Love on the Planet Earth", "That Distant Shore", "We Are the Crystal Gems", "Other Friends", and "Drift Away") although all the words are my own composure, using sites like RhymeZone and Rhymer.com to help as necessary. Additionally, the pages for Pearl (and the connected page on her history), the Gem Battlefield, Beach City, quotes of Peridot, and so on, from the Steven Universe fandom, helped.

The reference to Garnet and Amethyst joking that Pearl couldn't sing is a flashback by Story For Steven (s1ep48), although it's a funny flashback because it's an event that Greg did not witness, yet it is part of his story. I'd also point out that the part of this story where Pearl is in the Strawberry Battlefield is a bit reminiscent of how Glimmer acts in the She-Ra and the Princesses of Power episode, "Princess Prom" (s1ep8) when she is jealous of how Bow acts toward her. Of course, this was completely unintentional, but I must have watched it enough that this idea came into my mind!

Some parts of the story are inspired by Pearl's lines from Last One Out of Beach City, one of my favorite Steven Universe episodes. Other pages, like the ones for Dr. Gunnar Maelstrom and V.I.L.E. Faculty, on the Carmen Sandiego fandom site, and the transcript of the "Talk Radio" episode of Sailor Moon were helpful in crafting Maelstrom's message. Some lines are also inspired by my memory of Futurama, specifically what Cubert Farnsworth says when he is arrested for breaking a terms of service agreement.

Update on 6/14/25: Due to a rash of spam comments, I have restricted comments on this fic to registered users. If you are a guest and want to comment, I'm sorry, but the spammers, with their bots, are the ones that ruined this.

Works inspired by this one

Rise of the Scarlet Wildcat by lefemmerouge

Rise of the Scarlet Wildcat by lefemmerouge

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!